

Foreword



It is a rare privilege to read a personal career history in which so many of the principal features allow for reflection and others are instructive of later developments in the role of departmental secretaries in our system of government.

I have observed Andrew Podger's career in the Australian Public Service since the 1970s with interest, admiration and gratitude for the insight and competence he has assiduously given to his increasing responsibilities.

It is timely that the history of reform in public administration over three decades is recorded in this monograph and revealing to study relationships with Parliament and

government. It is important that leadership development of public administrators should be a leading objective.

Andrew's understanding of the support valuable to a minister invokes personal recollections and experience. My first ministerial appointment was in the Fraser Caretaker Government in 1975. The support of the secretary and the officers of the Department of Education is remembered with respect. The Prime Minister's guidance to new ministers was to value and seek the advice of the department. This was indeed pertinent advice, not only initially but throughout my ministerial appointments from 1975 to 1983.

I noted Andrew's comments about differing approaches from ministers with regard to Section 64 of the *Constitution*. I must say that I was always conscious of the appointment 'and to administer the Department of' and I found that the closest collaboration with the departments of Social Security and Finance resulted in the effective implementation of government policy. All ministers are bound by cabinet's authority and they should ensure that cabinet is fully informed of the political and whole-of-government outcomes of decisions taken.

Andrew was exemplary in his anticipation of information needed to support a cabinet submission or to defeat a conflicting Expenditure Review Committee imposition. The close association with my office was enhanced by the inclusion

of a staff member from the department to facilitate a valuable forthright exchange of views and information.

This monograph is remarkable for the breadth of experience it discloses through changes of government and some of the questions posed are signposts to the future. I am confident that Andrew will continue to be a contributor to excellence in public administration as it adapts to the needs of modern and sound government in Australia.

Margaret Guilfoyle

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Dame Margaret Guilfoyle was Minister for Education (1975), Minister for Social Security (1975–80) and Minister for Finance (1980–83). (Photo by kind permission of the Parliamentary Library.)